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Transformational Ethics of Film-Philosophy

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STELLINGEN

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Transformational Ethics of Film-Philosophy

THINKING THE CINEMAKEOVER

door **Martin P. Rossouw**

1. Because conceptions of 'film as philosophy' rely on diverse assumptions about what 'doing philosophy' is, the debate is in need of meta-theoretical perspectives that can open up new levels of exchange – middle grounds – between what otherwise would remain discordant positions.
2. Existing assessments of the film as philosophy debate emphasize questions of film's *degree* of engagement in/with philosophy at the expense of the decisive issue of the possible *conditions* for film's engagement in/with philosophy.
3. By most notably introducing a distinction between basic transformational 'modes' versus particular 'techniques', Johann Visagie's theory of transformational ethics adds a significant analytical dimension to the major aspects that comprise Michel Foucault's understanding of ethics.
4. In busying themselves with the theoretical question of how films do philosophy, philosophers consistently express an (often implicit) ethical interest in how such films may also do *more* than philosophy: namely, that they afford viewers various possible forms of personal transformation.
5. The ethics of self-concentration emerging from moderate notions of film as philosophy are more likely attainable for actual viewers than the often radical ethics of self-expansion suggested by bolder – and especially Deleuze-inspired – notions of film-philosophy.
6. The need for 'preparatory ethics' threatens to undermine not only the transformational ethics of the project of film as philosophy, but the very notion of film as philosophy itself.
7. The transformational effects that philosophers interpret in Terrence Malick's film style are best seen as acts of value-attribution, in accordance with the field's broader impulse to value films-as-philosophy for purposes of personal transformation.
8. Even though on the two extremes of the violence spectrum, philosophers who toil on the issue of film as philosophy exhibit the very same ethical motive as the fighters in David Fincher's *Fight Club* (1999).